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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 00545 151521Z

73
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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R 151452Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2665

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0545

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECDEF

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS PFOR ET US
SUBJ: SIZE OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY
GROUP (MAAG)

REFS: (A) ADDIS 11137 (B) STATE 242468 (C) STATE 278654

1. REF C INDICATES THAT THE SIZE OF THE MAAG IN ETHIOPIA
IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW BY DOD. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS,
FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT BE
CONSULTED BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE ON THIS SUBJECT

2. IN RESPONSE TO A STRONG REQUEST FROM THE LATE
GENERAL AMAN (REFTEL A), STATE AND DOD AGREED IN EARLY
NOVEMBER THAT THE PLANNED REDUCTION OF MAAG/ETHIOPIA
FROM 79 TO 45 POSITIONS WOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL FY
76 (REFTEL B). GENERAL AMAN ARGUED THAT THE HIGHER
LEVEL OF MANNING, WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE CONTINUED
OPERATION OF MAAG ADVISORS IN THE FIELD, WAS IMPORTANT
NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY'S MILITARY
EFFECTIVENESS BUT ALSO WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL
IMPORTANCE AS VISUAL EVIDENCE TO ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS
AND SOLDIERS OF AMERICAN SUPPORT. HE SAID AT THE TIME
THAT HIS VIEWS ON THIS WERE SHARED BY THE DIRG. WE
WERE NEVER QUITE SURE, HOWEVER, WHETHER THIS WAS ACTUALLY
THE CASE OR WHETHER THE INITIATIVE FOR THE HIGHER MANNING
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LEVEL CAME ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM AMAN HIMSELF.

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3. THE QUESTION SHOULD NOW BE ADDRESSED WHETHER THE 79-MAN MAAG STILL HAS IMPORTANT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR US-ETHIOIAN RELATIONS AS COMPARED WITH A 45-MAN MAAG. THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE HERE IS THAT THE SMALLER MAAG WOULD MEAN THE ELIMINATION OF ALL MAAG PERSONNEL OUTSIDE OF ADDIS ABABA, WHEREAS THE LARGER MAAG WOULD PERMIT SOME AUGMENTATION OF THE PRESENT ADVISORY EFFORT IN THE FIELD (BUT EXCLUDING ERITREA). IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE EMBASSY TO JUDGE AT PRESENT WHETHER THE PRESENCE OF THESE ADVISORS WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE VALUE FROM A POLITICAL STANDPOINT. IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE PRUDENT COURSE OF ACTION WOULD THEREFORE BE FOR THE CHARGE' TO BROACH THIS SUBJECT AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY WITH THE PMAC CHAIRMAN AND INQUIRE WHETHER THE DIRG HAS A STRONG PREFERENCE WITH REGARD TO THE CONTINUATION OF A MAAG ADVISORY EFFORT IN THE FIELD.

4. THE EMBASSY REALIZES THAT IT WOULD HARDLY BE ADVISABLE TO SOUND OUT THE VIEWS OF THE DIRG ON THIS ISSUE UNLESS WE ARE PREPARED TO RESPECT ANY STRONG PREFERENCE WHICH GENERAL TEFERI THEN EXPRESSES ON THIS SUBJECT. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS AS A WHOLE IS SO CRUCIAL, HOWEVER, THAT WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE SOUNDEST COURSE OF ACTION TO PURSUE ON THIS ISSUE. SPECIFICALLY, IT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS NOT ONLY BY PROVIDING THE POSSIBILITY OF COORDINATING US PLANS FOR MAAG STRENGTH WITH THE PREFERENCES OF THE DIRG, BUT ALSO BE DEMONSTRATING TO THE DIRG THAT WE ARE GIVING FULL CONSIDERATION TO THEIR PREFERENCES ON THISIMPORTANT MATTER INSTEAD OF PRESENTING THEM WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

5. IF WE MAKE A DECISION ON THIS ISSUE WITHOUT CONSULTING THE EPMG IN ADVANCE, THE RESULTS MAY BE CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE. IF WE DECIDE AND PROCEED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A 79-MAN MAAG, WE MAY DISCOVER AT SOME POINT THAT THE EPMG NO LONGER DESIRES OR WILL PERMIT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AMERICAN MILITARY
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ADVISORS TO BE PRESENT OUT IN THE FIELD. IF WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, DECIDE AND PROCEED WITH THE IMPLEMENTA-TION OF A 45-MAN MAAG, IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THE EPMG WILL LATER REPROACH US FOR HAVING RENEGED ON A VERY CLEAR-CUT COMMITMENT WE GAVE ON THIS SUBJECT TO GENERAL AMAN. WYMAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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